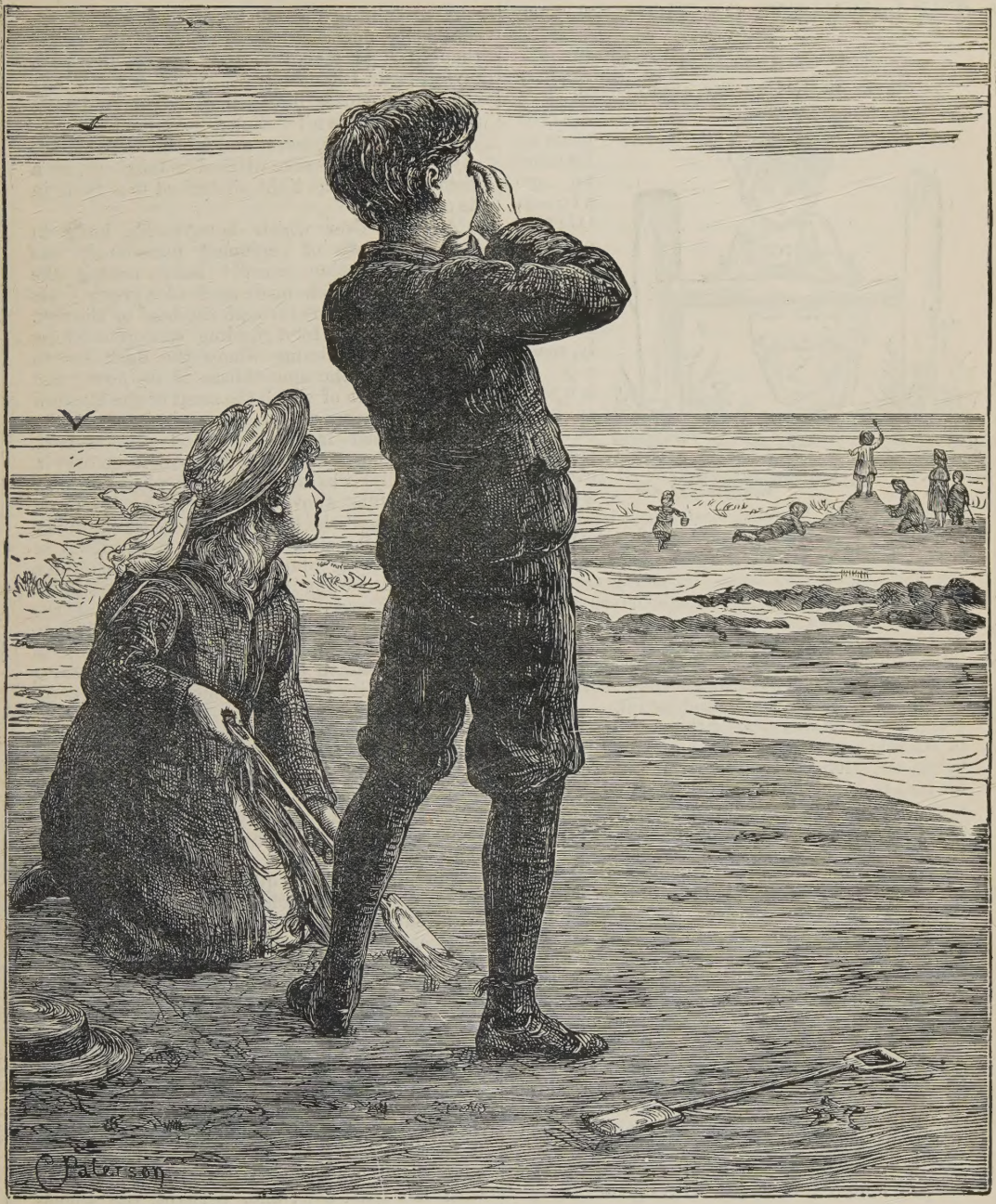
YOUNG DAYS.



"THE FIRST SIGNAL OF DANGER WAS GIVEN BY A LITTLE FELLOW" (see page 102).

No. 177.—September, 1890. Vol. XV.

THE LAWNLEYS OF HIGHCLIFFE.

BY G. NORWAY.

CHAPTER III.

OLIVER STARTS ON HIS ADVENTURES.

HAVING made up his mind to go alone, Oliver settled to go at night. He, accordingly, made up a knapsack of such among his clothes as he thought would be most useful to him, opened his money box, and sighed over the small sum there; put the gold into a secret pocket, keeping the loose change to serve him as far as might be; visited the larder, and made havoc among the cook's stores of pastry and currant cakes, packing up some in case of need; wrote a few lines to his mother to tell her of his intention; then changed his clothes to a strong serviceable suit of dark murrey cloth, and set off.

As soon as he was clear of the avenue he began to whistle a merry tune, for he was not used to being out alone at night, and it was company for him to hear some cheerful sound; but, after a short time, the solemn influence of the hour and darkness silenced him, and called up a graver mood.

He had no doubt of having done well in starting off in this manner, upon his own responsibility, for he had a strong masterful will, and never liked to acknowledge, even to himself, that he could have judged wrongly; but he could not avoid recollections of how almost all the gentry in the neighbourhood held aloof from Monmouth's cause; how old Mr. Bisset, his nearest neighbour, had laughed to scorn the story of the secret marriage; and how Dr. Reynolds, in his sermon the preceding Sunday, had dilated upon the horrors of civil war, and the Christian duty of refraining from such a thing unless at the call of God.

Was he acting at the call of God, or was he creating a duty for himself, wilfully?

A certain qualm of distrust came over his conscience, nor could he allay it by the proud thought "At least I may do what I like with myself! If I have made a mistake, I can bear the consequences like a man. It is nobody's affair but my own!" So on he walked.

The moon rose, sweet and fair in the summer sky, and a corn crake uttered a faint cry, at a distance, as if the light disturbed it a little in its nest.

A bank, over which honeysuckle hung in tangled masses of perfumed luxuriance, was starred with tiny emerald lamps among the plumy fern, which made such nice green tents for the glow worms through the heat of the day.

Then he came to a rippling stream, catching the faint moonbeams where the dark brown stones broke the smoothness of its flow; and from the edges of which the scent of the meadow sweet was heavy on the air.

A thatched farm-house stood a little back from the lane, with a long garden before it, where hollyhocks and tall white lilies rose in stately beauty above damask rose bushes; and he could smell the early apples ripening in the orchard at its side. Everyone was asleep in the house, with blue and white checked linen curtains shrouding the latticed windows; but the mowey stood on the further side of the gardens, and Oliver saw a tawny owl slowly sail along there, on outspread pinions, towards its home beneath the wide eaves of the barn, carrying in its talons a mouse for the young birds' supper.

Something flitted past him, brushing his face as it passed. It was a bat, with a furry little body, and such broad leathery wings as seemed quite inadequate to so small a creature. There was another,—a third. They were quite busy beneath the oak trees which now over-shadowed the road.

The mill wheel was quiet, and the pool looked sullen, deep, and treacherous, with the reflection of the surrounding buildings darkening its clear surface. The road went up a steep bit of hill there, and when he reached the top, there were long shafts of light already shooting up in the east, and a cock crew in some far off farm-yard. He must not linger if he would wish to reach Taunton before breakfast. So he put his back into his work, and trudged on resolutely.

It was a long way, even for Oliver's sturdy feet, and he was very glad when the tower of St. Mary Magdalene's church came in sight. He thought he would go and see his little sister, who was at school in the town. He ought to wish her good-bye; and, perhaps, the school-

mistress, who was a good natured old lady, would give him his breakfast.

The school was in a handsome brick house in the principal street. It had white stone facings, a carved pediment over the front door, with an iron frame for a lamp hanging from it, and iron extinguishers on either hand, where servants might extinguish their torches, after having escorted their master home by their glare; for this had been the town house of a country gentleman with rank and fortune, only he had wasted all his possessions by rioting at Court in the days of Charles II., so he had been fain to sell his broad acres and comfortable mansions, even before Rochester had killed him in a duel.

Now it was a girl's school; and upon his enquiry for Miss Lawnley, little Muriel came running to clasp her arms round his neck, and hug him closely.

"Oh Oliver! you good, good boy! How nice of you to come this very day! Had you heard of the grand doings, and did you come on purpose to see us in them?"

"No, I did not know you were going to have frolics, what are you going to do? Set about hay harvest?"

"Hay harvest! No, indeed, nothing so every day as that! Don't you remember, when we were ever so little, a grand gentleman came, and father and mother went to see him, and left us at home, and how I rolled down the hedge just before his horse, and he picked me up, and gave me my pretty silver lozenge box?"

"Aye, I remember. That was the great Duke of Monmouth, you know."

"Yes," cried Muriel, nodding her head till all her flaxen curls fell into her eyes. "Yes, I know, and he is coming again, and *I* am going to give *him* something to-day."

"You, pussie! What are you going to give to King Monmouth?"

"Why, we have all been busy, all of us girls. We have each done a bit, and it is a beautiful great blue banner, with the arms embroidered on it, and "Success to Monmouth." We are all to walk in procession with it, and I am to make the speech because I am the smallest of all!"

"Why pussie, you will never have courage to speak to so grand a gentleman!"

"Yes, I shall, because I shall be thinking all the time of how he picked me up, and wiped the mud off, and looked so kindly at me out of those kind kind eyes. Oh! I love him too much to be afraid of him."

Oliver stayed to breakfast with his sister, and then strolled out into the town.

Everybody carried a green branch in his hat, by way of cockade. Wreaths of evergreens and flowers were hung over the houses, and flags were flying everywhere. The whole place was in gala trim, and there was plenty to see.

Early in the afternoon, the procession advanced into the town, and passed along the principal streets, received with wild enthusiasm by the people. The hurrahing was tremendous; the crowds pressed so eagerly forwards that many were thrown down, and some trampled upon. Bands of music played, trumpets were blown, cries and shouts raised on every hand; yet was the show a disappointment to Oliver.

It lacked the gaiety and merriment which had attended the former one. The gentlemen were older and looked sterner, their garments were not so smart.

The look of melancholy in Monmouth's fine eyes was much more perceptible; he smiled less, and his face had coarsened perceptibly. But, though changed, his was still a goodly presence, a lordly demeanour.

It was a pretty sight to see the children present him with their banner. There were twenty or thirty of them, many quite little girls, under ten years of age; all clad in snowy white, and the richly hued banner borne aloft by the six eldest of the party, they marched in file, headed by their schoolmistress, who carried a Bible as her gift.

Muriel, though not the youngest, was the smallest and prettiest of all, so she had been selected to make the speech, praying the Duke's acceptance of the gifts.

Oliver stood among the crowd, and watched her with brotherly pride, as, flushing to a carnation colour which brightly relieved her white frock and profusion of clustering flaxen curls, she stepped forward, presented by her mistress, and repeated her carefully rehearsed address.

Monmouth looked down into the blue eyes uplifted to his, and the pretty rosy lips, smiling up into his face with pleased recognition, and the former scene flashed again across his memory.

"Do I see again the fair wild rose of Lawnley?" asked he, with that royal gift of never forgetting a face or a name. "Sweetheart, the banner worked by the innocent hands of thyself and thy companions must needs bring me good fortune, and shall wave over my victorious march to Westminster. Lady,"—added he, turning to the schoolmistress, "I rejoice to think that the future mothers of my people should be trained in loyality by such as thou. I accept thy gift with reverence and pleasure,

for I come to defend the truths contained in this book, and to seal them, if it must be so, with my blood."

The lady knelt and kissed his hand, as did each of her scholars in turn; but he lifted little Muriel in his arms, and kissed her brow.

"May God bless thee, my pretty one," said he, with a sigh, as he put her down.

The people broke out into renewed applause, and Oliver felt his heart swell almost to bursting with love for that gracious man.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SHIP IN THE BRISTOL DOCK.

Oliver tried in vain to obtain an audience of Monmouth until late in the day, so great was the concourse of people thronging around, eager to be enrolled in his service.

At last he managed to squeeze into the presence chamber, and up to the table where sat a clerk, entering the names in a large book. The Duke stood by, his face more deeply flushed than in the morning, but courteous as ever.

"Oliver Lawnley!" he exclaimed, as the boy gave his name in a bold, firm voice. Oliver Lawnley! I should know that name and you too. I saw your sweet little sister this morning; but, my lad this is a warfare for men, not for boys like you. Where is your father?"

"Dead, my lord."

"Ah! that is sad. Are you the heir?"

"Even so," replied Oliver.

"And your following? What retainers have you? How many armed men can you head?"

"Alas, my lord, I can only bring my own service, for I am under age and not yet come into my own. But that service shall be true and loyal."

Monmouth smiled and sighed at the same time. Admiration for the boy's gallantry and a pitiful regard for the ignorance which prompted it, seized him at that moment.

He could not persuade himself to accept the homage dictated in such utter disregard of the probable consequences, and, to his honour, he declined it under a plea which could give no offence to the lad's youthful pride.

"My friend, I cannot find wherewithal to arm stalwart men who are as loyal as you. We have to straighten scythes and reaping hooks for weapons as it is, nor can we provide all. Go home, and wait for a few years until you can either arm yourself, or, like my royal father, 'The King shall enjoy his own again.' We will not forget you, nor your eagerness to serve us. At present, you are not in condition to be of use. Fare you well."

Oliver was forced to make his obeisance and retire; but he vowed to himself that he would find some way in which to be of use yet. He therefore hung about the town; followed the gathering rebel army to Bridgewater, Glastonbury, Wells, and Shepton Mallet; always on foot; supporting himself from his own rescources, though husbanding them as carefully as might be.

He attracted some attention from the notice which Monmouth had taken of him, and his persistent march with the troops.

Several of the Duke's friends spoke to him at times, some laughingly, some in a patronizing spirit, but Monmouth himself refused to entertain him, or even to see him, though more than one pleaded his cause with the leader.

In the last week of June, the army came to a village whence Bristol was only distant about five miles, although it was a long day's march to have reached the city by crossing the river Avon at the nearest place where a bridge existed, and this bridge had been broken down by the militia, so that Monmouth was obliged to wait while he sent a party forward to repair it.

Many of his captains were dissatisfied with this measure, and great discussion took place as to its prudence.

"We might have taken the city by surprise, easily," said one. "By this delay we give Beaufort time to prepare a defence."

"We could have done nothing but invite a bloody defeat, did we attack those fortifications," said another. "By crossing the river at Keynsham, we come to their weak point."

"Delay never availed any attacking party,' replied the first. "It throws the advantage' into the hands of the defence."

"Surprise would have been easily contrived could we have set fire to the shipping," said a third. "Kindle a good blaze among those merchantmen's masts and sails, and we could have rushed in and overpowered stronger fortifications than those."

Oliver was bivouacking with these men, who had taken a strong fancy to him, and among whom was no stern discipline which excluded followers from the camp.

"How could the shipping be set on fire?" asked he.

"Easily enough, by even such a boy as you," said the speakers, "provided he were bold and brave. Those ships are full of matters which catch fire upon very small provocation, and would make a fine blaze when once kindled. Tar, pitch, hemp, are inflammable enough, to

say nothing of their cargoes, which consist so largely of rum, sugar, oil, and such like."

"Tell me how to do it," cried Oliver, eagerly, "and it shall be done this night. If I may not fight for the Duke I can do this service at least."

A loud and rude laugh made the echoes ring again at this speech.

"A Hop o' my Thumb! A Hop o' my Thumb!" cried they.

"Hast a bulrush for thy sword, and a thimble for thy hat, my son?" asked one. "Wilt fight a traverse with the castle cat?"

"Let him alone," said another. "Wisdom cometh through the mouths of babes and sucklings."

Oliver flushed high. "Ye may scorn me because I am young," said he, trembling with emotion, "but I *can* do it, and I *will*. Look out for your bonfire by midnight."

He rose and walked away with all the dignity which he could summon, followed by their mocking laughter.

But, before midnight, all Bristol was thrown into confusion by the sudden conflagration which broke out in a vessel that lay at anchor by the quay. The flames rushed up the strong fir poles which composed the masts;—they played along the tarry ropes, and glowed fiercely in the masses of the sails reefed to the yard-arms.

Fragments of blazing wood fell hissing into the water of the docks or were conveyed upon the decks of adjoining vessels as the wind carried them. The guns, which all vessels, even peaceful merchantmen, carried then, went off by the heat; and did the fire reach the powder magazine, so that the ship blew up, destruction might be carried far and near among the craft that crowded the port.

The whole of the city was in alarm,—the streets were crowded with frightened ship-owners and excited populace, shouting seditious cries.

This would, indeed, have been Monmouth's opportunity, and by what fatality he failed to seize it, none can tell.

The fire was plainly seen from his camp. Oliver's friends rushed into his presence, and related what had occurred, expressing themselves as convinced that the boy had, in some lucky manner, succeeded in his boast.

The Duke of Beaufort, commander of the royal troops in Bristol, expected nothing else than an attack upon the city, under cover of the darkness and confusion. He would not allow his soldiers to assist in extinguishing the fire, and saving the shipping; but kept the troops, all night long, drawn up around the church of St. Mary Redcliffe, in readiness for the looked for attack,—which never came.

Monmouth refused to advance except by crossing the Keynsham bridge; he proceeded to that place next day, and was met by a troop of royalists under Colonel Oglethorpe, who, after a brilliant skirmish, inflicted so much damage upon his undisciplined cavalry, that he perceived their incapability, and gave up the hope of taking Bristol.

Then he wandered aimlessly about the country, from one village to another, harassed everywhere by the royalist troops which hovered around his path, and skirmished with his outposts daily. He was joined by crowds of gallant and devoted labourers, but by none who brought in discipline, money, or arms. His case grew more hopeless each hour, and was brought to a climax at Sedgemoor, the history of which battle is too well known to need repetition in this story.

It suffices to remark that it caused a complete and decided disintegration of the rebel army. Monmouth himself was taken prisoner, and beheaded on the scaffold.

By the end of July all was over, except the awful retribution which fell upon these poor, deluded, ignorant country people.

Terrible indeed was this retribution. Military executions were plentiful under the command of Feversham the ruthless, and the bloodthirsty, savage Kirke; but these were followed by civil law, more savage, more ruthless, administered by the infamous Judge Jefferies, who showed no mercy upon old or young, man, woman, or child.

Terror seized upon the whole country-side, dismay ruled the hearts of the populace.

(To be continued.)

SWEET-PEA.

BY HELEN LOUISE TOWNE

A NAUGHTY little Rainbow once
  Was told by her mamma,
That since the day was warm and bright,
  She must not wander far,
Or she would perish. Yet, my dears,
  This wilful Rainbow flew
To play with sunbeams on the earth,
  And melted into dew.

But where the Rainbow touched our earth
  God's pity turned it into flowers;
And thus it was she had her birth,—
  This dainty, fair Sweet-Pea of ours.

LITTLE ASKER'S PAGE.

SEPTEM means seven. So that we must have reached the seventh month of the year. And yet, when you come to count, September is really the *ninth* month. How is that?

One thing is sure, the summer holidays are over. That is to say, you are no longer away at the sea-side, or among the hills, but at home, at work, or at school. And are summer holidays all done with so soon as they are past? I do not think so. Your bodies, for instance, are they quite the same as they were before the holidays? Not quite. Some millions of health-atoms went into them while you were at play by the sea, beneath the sky, in the open air. And although the brown and red may have begun already to wear off from your hands and faces, those millions of health-atoms cannot be worn out of your bodies so easily.

And so with your minds. For example, it is just a year since I had a holiday in Switzerland, But have I forgotten it? Is it not in my mind yet? In my mind!—why, I was almost going to say that all that I saw in Switzerland a year ago has been more in my mind this summer than it was last summer when I saw it! But that can hardly be so. If what I saw did not go into my mind last summer it could not be in my mind this summer. The only thing I want to make clear is that your holiday, long after it is past, may still live in your memory. You can "look back" to it, as we say. And what a harvest of happy memories one can gather in a holiday! They are like pictures hung up in our minds. Here's one picture only that I will give, although I could, as you could, give scores if we could draw on paper, like our artist, half the sights we have seen in this summer's holiday.

This scene was at the sea-side. Children were busy on the sands with buckets and spades. A few of them had built up a big hillock. Further in, nearer the sea, two boys had waded to a tiny sand island, and were digging a well in the centre of it. They had been at it so long, and were so taken up with what they were doing, that they never noticed how the tide was coming in; and would very soon cut off their chance of wading back, indeed, cover their island altogether! The first signal of danger was given by a little fellow who happened to be standing on the newly made sand-hillock. Then a bigger boy, who seemed to be with his sister, took up the shout. And it is just that picture our artist caught. As to the incident, it might have been very serious but for the cry of the little fellow on the hillock.

CATS ON HOLIDAY.

Tom and Jo their names are, or, if you think it more polite, Thomas and Josephine. They are brother and sister, not a year old yet, and came from a farm not far from our own home. As we were going to close our house for a month the question was: What must we do with the cats? We thought of many things, but, after all, decided to take them with us. Still I myself was against the cats going from the first. Indeed, I made a dreadful prophecy, which I honestly feared would prove true. There was a great wood about three fields off from where they were staying. It is full of game, especially rabbits. I prophecied that Tom and Jo would be certain to get into this wood, hunting something or other, and that they would either be lost or else the game-keeper would certainly shoot them. However, I was a false prophet, or I should never have told you about the cats at all. But I tell you now to let you know that even young cats that are fond of you may be taken from home quite safely. Cats can get just as much attached to persons as to places. These two appeared as much at home with us there as can be. In fact, Tom has shown himself to have something of the fondness of a dog towards us, for one day we found him insisting on going with us along the road; and ever after he became as playful as a dog if we took him with us in our walks through the fields. He would scamper on ahead, roll in the grass, or lie down on his back in the pathway and wait for us to catch up and pat him. When we stopped to rest he *maouhed* to go on again, and he dearly likes a race with one of us. I ought to have said that both cats belong to my boy, and that not even he can have enjoyed the holiday more than Tom and Jo.

IS IT GOING TO RAIN?

Ah, how often we ask that question in a year's time, especially in our holidays. And who can answer it for us? Country-folk, farmers, and animals seem much more weather-wise than we who live in towns. Of course, they ought to be. It is said that when it is going to be wet the cattle always keep on the

lower ground. I remember this summer we were looking at some deer up the hillsides in the distance, and a farmer told one of our party that when the deer climbed toward the hill-tops it was a sure sign of fine weather. But we who live in the towns have neither deer nor cows to look at, so that we cannot go by them. It is true we have our cats, and when we see them with their backs towards the fire we commonly say: "it's going to rain." And besides our cats we may have our own barometer to tap, tap, and our newspapers in which the meteorologists inform us about the coming weather. And still we don't seem to be satisfied. Well, there are many other ways of fore-casting the weather. But the most beautifully simple is one just given by a writer in *Chamber's Journal* on "Natural Barometers." This is it:

A BREAKFAST WEATHER-GUAGE.

He says: "With my breakfeast I drink coffee mixed with milk. When poured into the cup I gently drop in the lumps of loaf sugar, and shortly after the fixed air in the sugar rises to the top in small detached bubbles. Now watch these: I call them my little people, who will tell me if it is going to rain or not; and although the coffee is perfectly still, these little bubbles will be on the move, almost like life. It will be noticed that if it is going to rain very hard they will almost rush over to the side of the cup—as much as to say, "I shall get under shelter as quickly as possible." If the rain is only to be a gentle downfall, then the bubbles all meet together, evidently to deliberate on the matter, and then quietly move over to the side; but if it is not going to rain, every bubble that comes up remains stationary in the middle of the cup." The writer adds that during the past four or five years these "little people" have not deceived him a dozen times. Try it, yourselves!

F. E. S. wants to know who started the custom of wearing wedding rings?

No one seems to know "who," but the following is usually believed to be the reason "why":—An ancient *ring* was also a *seal* by which orders were signed. (See *Esther* iii. 10-12.) The giving of a ring was a sign that the giver endowed the person who received it with all the power he himself possessed. (See *Gen.* xli. 42). And so a ring was given in marriage to show that the woman who had the ring could issue commands as her husband and was in every respect his representative.

Another Little Asker inquires: "What is a meteor?" *A Shooting Star*, such as we see in November, is the usual answer. But this answer does not explain much, for, what are shooting stars? Astronomers have not found it easy to tell us all we want to know even about these stars which they say are so small as to vary from 30 grains to $7\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. in weight; and so many as to fall in "star-showers." The grandest "star-shower" was in 1866, when meteors fell at the rate of 57 a minute, the entire down-pour numbering altogether about 240,000 meteors, and the opinion of the best astronomers seems to be that each of these meteors is a piece of world-material, flung off, it may-be from the sun, something like a cinder from a rushing railway engine. By its rush through such air as there is in space it is supposed the meteor gets red-hot, even white-hot; then it may melt into liquid or gas and burst away into atoms, or, if not thus dissolved, it may dash on through space at 30 miles a second, growing every moment hotter and brighter, longer and finer until it falls upon our world, or some other, in dust or ash.

———

Dorothy asks: "Can you tell me anything about a Butterfly?" Indeed, I can dear. But what is it you particularly want to know? There is so much to tell, that all *Young Days* wouldn't hold it. Have you got "Little Asker?" If so please read Chapter V., and then, if there is something more you want to know about a Butterfly, write again.

———

Gertrude Brooks asks: "Which is the oldest church in England?" Wasn't that your question, Gertrude? Well, it is not very easy to answer. It is said that "the first stone church in England was erected at Lincoln, and was thought to be a great curiosity." So that if any part of that church is still standing it must be the oldest. Why was it "a great curiosity?" Because it was built of *stone!* Yes, the fact is that all the earlier churches in England were built of wood. Such a thing as building with stone had never been thought of. Some of the earliest churches were only sheds made of branches of trees. Fires often destroyed these churches of timber or boughs. But when the Normans came in 1066 they began to build churches in stone. Then it was that most of of our present grand cathedrals began,—Durham, Lincoln, York, Canterbury, &c. But which of the churches in all England is the oldest is very difficult to tell, though I should have thought that some parts of Canterbury Cathedral are the oldest, when I call to mind the coming of Augustine. Does Gertrude know Brooke Herford's "Story of Religion in England?" If so will she please read the first few chapters, and then write again?

AFTERNOONS IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

(Conclusion.)

A FEW nights later came something which Gypsy would never forget to the longest day she lived. Tom had gone with some companions to a lecture a few miles distant and could not be home until ten o'clock ; Mr. Breynton had gone to bed as usual at half-past nine, Mrs. Breynton had also retired early with a headache, and Gypsy had undertaken to let him in. She went up to her room thinking she would lay and listen for his footsteps, and in the stillness dropped off to sleep. Soon she began to dream, she saw Tom on the brink of a precipice, and she and her mother were vainly trying to hold him back, he was about to spring forward when she awoke with a start to find the moon shining full into her room. Was Tom not home yet ? She was sure he ought to be long before now. She would creep down quietly and see. Why ! what could be the matter ? It was nearly twelve o'clock. Surely there must have been some accident. If he did not come soon she must wake her father and mother. She would sit down on the stairs a little while and listen.

About half-an-hour later Gypsy heard steps come nearer and nearer. Surely that unsteady, wavering sound could never be the noise made by Tom's tread ? How often had she heard his firm, manly footstep ring on the pavement ! but someone was staggering against the door and Tom reeled into the passage, as Gypsy had never seen him do before.

She managed somehow, to support him up to his bed-room, and while she was gone to fetch him the glass of water he had asked for he fell into a heavy drunken sleep.

Gypsy had a poor invalid friend that she used to go to for advice, and whom she used to tell all her troubles, and this was what she told her next day :

"You see I knew Tom would be so sorry afterwards. He never means to be bad, only he doesn't think. And I couldn't say anything to Father, because Tom doesn't quite get on with him ; he says something cross and it only makes Tom worse. Mother knew about it I think, because when Tom said he had a headache and couldn't come down to breakfast she went up to see what was the matter, and she stayed a long time. I went up afterwards, and I was such a little goose, I couldn't say anything ; so I just jumped on his knee and put my arms all round his neck and kissed him. I could just see by his eyes how sorry and how ashamed he was ; so presently he said :

"I should think you would never love me any more, Gypsy."

But I said I should, I should love him more than ever, only *I meant* to be proud of him too, and he must promise me that he would never, never, touch those bad, nasty drinks that made people wicked and ill again. He was a long time before he would promise, and I had to coax him a lot, but at last he said he didn't know but that he would have to—just to get rid of me. So he did, and Tom never breaks his word, so I don't feel afraid about his getting like that again ; but afterwards we had a nice talk, and he told me all about his college life, and how hard it was to keep straight. He said too that he didn't have many letters from home to remind him that we were thinking about him the last part of the quarter, and that's one thing that will never happen again if I know myself intimately."

And Patience Mayhorne listened, and suggested, and helped Gypsy with the quiet tender sympathy which only a true friend can give. Nearly the close of the holidays Tom had an accident that sprained his ankle, and kept him indoors, and Gypsy had another opportunity which she made the most of. She it was who changed his bandages, made him jellies, sang to him, read to him, and played draughts. Her holidays were just then, so she could have plenty of time, and if sometimes she would rather have had a game with her schoolfellows she knew that she might never again have Tom to herself again like this, and that seed must be sown with no grudging hand if we would reap a good and bountiful harvest.

He went back to college, but not before he had thanked Gypsy, and told her he didn't think many fellows had such a sister as he was blessed with. But with his return fresh troubles began ; he did not drink ; his promise saved him from that, though the temptation was great ; he spent more than his father allowed him, though, and indulged in a little betting as well as neglecting his studies. Then, too, he was seized with a great desire to be a soldier, and sent home letters begging to be allowed to leave college and go to help fight for the freedom of the slaves, as others in the college were doing ; and when his father forbade him to think of such a thing and his mother wrote "My son, in this I quite agree with your father. You are too young yet,"—Tom felt himself terribly ill-used, and brooded silently over his grievance.

Another trouble gathered round Gypsy's head. Partly perhaps because of the worry about Tom, Mrs. Breynton's headaches got more and more frequent, and one day as Gypsy was coming home from school she saw her father drive hurriedly down the street and stop at the doctor's. She hastened home, found the parlour empty and her mother lying on the bed upstairs. With a quietness and tact which no one had before suspected careless Gypsy to possess, she, at once, took her place in the sick-room, took the doctor's orders, saw to her father's comfort, coaxed and scolded Winnie into obedience ; only once breaking down, when things seemed at their worst, and Gypsy felt as if the dear, dear mother was slipping away from her, and she *could* not bear to have her go.

She thought Mrs. Breynton was asleep, but as she sat by the fire the flickering flame showed the invalid her tear-stained face ; and a weak pathetic voice said :

"Gypsy, my child, come here, I want you."

"Yes, mother, what is it ?"

"Why are you crying ?"

For answer Gypsy laid her head down on the counterpane, and sob followed sob ; for the feelings that had been so long repressed must have vent, now that the floodgates were once lifted.

"I know how ill I am, better perhaps than anyone else; I think I shall get well again ; but if I should not—Gypsy ! there is Tom",—

"Yes, mother."

He will want a sister to be patient with him, to make allowance for him, to be more generous to him than he can be to himself ; Gypsy, Tom *must* grow up a good man ; I cannot have it any other way."

"Mother, whether you live or die, I promise you I will be that sister."

But God was merciful, and Gypsy's mother did not die ; and if she had, he would have been merciful still. To no one else in the house was that experience quite what it was to Gypsy, however. For the first time in her life she had looked into an open grave and had known that life could go on with a face she loved always missing and a voice for ever silent in the home.

Then came a long period of convalescence, and Gypsy's hands were full; yet in the midst of it all, she found time to scribble pencil notes to Tom. Years afterwards when she was turning out his desk she came upon these hurried scrawls tied round carefully with a piece of ribbon, and said "What do you keed these for ? Shall I burn them ?" "*No*, I'd rather lose all the others I've got than those. Don't I know you wrote them when you were tired out, when you were worried, and when you ought to have been in bed. I'll keep those to the end of my days."

So this little seed of love and thought came up. But the reaping time was not yet.

One morning a letter came from Tom, to say that he had enlisted in the army ; could they forgive him ? He was sure he could become a general if he were a soldier, and he knew he should never do any good at college. His disobedience gave great pain to his parents, and he was not long before he began to find out that there were troubles there as well as at school. The long forced marches were too much for his strength and he suffered fearfully with neuralgia.

Soon Peace Mayhorne's suffering life ended, and Gypsy, sad as she was to lose her friend, could rejoice in her freedom from pain. Most of us, if we live long enough find our saint, and Gypsy had found hers ; just where Peace had helped her most living, she helped her most dead. In a quiet chamber of her heart, where cross Gypsy, tired Gypsy, impatient Gypsy never came, on quiet Sunday evenings, at twilight times, and when the clear stars came out in the sky, Gypsy thought over their old talks together and sought and found help for her difficulties as she had been used to do.

As she was busy with household tasks a few months later, Winnie brought in a telegram, which Gypsy took and opened lest it should be something that might alarm her mother, to whom it was directed. These were the words it contained :

"Your son is wounded in the shoulder. May not live through the day."

As if she was in a dream, Gypsy sent a message to her father, and between them they broke the news to Mrs. Breynton as gently as they could. To her the hardest part seemed to be that she could not go to him ; her strength was not sufficient for the journey. Gypsy must start at once with her father, and still with a feeling that it was all a terrible dream, she packed a portmanteau with all the little things which might be needed.

As long as she lived she would never forget that night's journey. She and her father hardly dared to look in each other's faces to see the fear which was written there ; once, however, as they were changing carriages, an invalid was being carried by on the platform, whose shrunken shoulders and pale face carried Gypsy's thoughts back to Peace Mayhorne, and

the recollection of her talks and the consultations they used to have about Tom made it seem possible to ask One who loved him better even than his sister did to have him in his gracious care and keeping, and to bring good, even out of this trouble, to them all.

"Thomas Breynton, sir?" said the porter in answer to their enquiries. "Yes, you will find him in No. 3 Ward, if he isn't—"

They hurried on, lest they should hear the sentence finished, and reaching the ward found the bed empty. Were they come too late? Gypsy clung to her father's arm without a word. Then a gentle hand was laid on her shoulder and a kind voice said :

"No, my dear, he is not dead ; he was moved to another ward this morning and is getting on as well as possible."

There indeed lay Tom, too weak yet to talk much, but handsomer, Gypsy thought, than ever ; and when they had stayed with him a week, and he and his father had had one long, long talk, which made them understand one another better than they had ever done in their lives before, Mr. Breynton went home, leaving Gypsy to be nurse and companion till he was fit to travel. The first evening they were alone together he told Gypsy something that made her very happy :—

"Gypsy, when I'm well again I'm going back to college."

"Oh, Tom!" This was said in a very different tone to that in which she said it when she found he had been cheating over his Latin lessons.

"And, Gypsy, *I'm going to behave!*"

And a proud, glad sister was Gypsy three years later when on the great day at the college, with her father, mother, and Winnie, she listened to Tom's prize poem, which was said to be one of the best given for many years, and prouder still was she when more than one of the Professors told her how great was the satisfaction Tom's conduct had given to the heads of the college ; but I think it was the very proudest moment of her life, when, that night as she and her brother walked under the elm trees together, he said to her,

"I don't know how to talk about it as some fellows would, or to say how I thank you, Gypsy; but if it hadn't been for you, I should not be where I am to-day."

Was not such a reaping worthy of the sowing? And who shall tell where the harvest of our deeds shall end?

WOMEN OF THE BIBLE.

ESTHER.

Amongst the many feasts of the Jews is one called the Feast of Purim, which is held in commemoration of the deliverance from some great peril that threatened the people when they were in exile in Persia, and from which they were saved through the influence gained by a Jewish maiden over one of the Persian monarchs. King Ahasuerus, we read in the Book of Esther, made a great feast for all the princes of his land, and having eaten of the good things, and drunk much wine, they re ame excited, and the king began to boast of his possessions, and of the beauty of his queen —Vashti—of whom he was very proud, and to prove his words sent his chamberlains to order her to come to him and show her beauty.

Now Vashti was entertaining the wives of the princes when the message was brought to her, and guessing the state the king must be in for him to send such an insulting command, she haughtily refused to obey.

The king, astonished at her refusal, appealed to his guests to know what he should do, and they, fearing that if their own wives should hear of this act of disobedience of the queen's, they too might refuse to obey, begged him to send her away, and to find another queen who would be more compliant ; and the king, acting on this advice, sent Vashti from the palace.

But soon Ahasuerus began to miss his beautiful wife, and his courtiers advised him to fill her place, so he sent a decree through all the land, that a number of young maidens should be brought to him to choose from.

Amongst the persons continually about the palace was a Jew named Mordecai, whose niece, Esther, had lived with him since the death of her father and mother, and hearing the king's decree he determined to send her to take her chance with the others, bidding her conceal her nationality, as the Jews were hated in the land.

When Esther's turn came, she went in to the king, and looked so beautiful and so good, that he fell in love with her, and took her to be queen in the place of Vashti.

The chief officer of the king's household was Haman, who, having been much in the confidence of his royal master, had grown so proud and so imperious that he expected every one to do him homage, and Mordecai's refusal to do so gained him the hatred and enmity of Haman, who determined to be revenged not on Mordecai alone, but by the destruction of the whole Jewish people.

At last, by representing that the Jews made their own laws and were not bound by those of the king, he succeeded in obtaining a decree that on a certain day all the Jews should be put to death, and orders to that effect were sent round to the governors of the different provinces.

When Mordecai hears of this, he is in great distress, and determines to try Esther's influence over the king, but though her grief and anxiety are very great, she is much perplexed how to act, for there is a law that no one—not even the queen—shall dare to enter the king's presence without his permission, on pain of death. What then can she do? How save her people and herself? for Haman would be sure to have her removed out of his way. For three days she and her maidens fast and pray, and then, putting on her royal apparel, she determines to risk all, and to give, if necessary, her life for her people.

Fortunately the king, being in an amiable mood and alone, bids her come to him, and promises beforehand to grant her request, "even to half of my kingdom," but Esther only asks him and Haman to come to her banquet. This the king readily promises, and Haman is delighted at this fresh honour.

At the end of the repast, she asks them to come again on the morrow, and then she will present her petition.

On his way out Haman meets Mordecai, who once more refuses to bow before him; and feeling that he is now high in favour with both king and queen, he thinks there will be but little difficulty in getting the hated Jew disgraced, and actually erects a scaffold on which to hang him.

That night the king, unable to sleep, to pass away the time, looks through the records of his kingdom, and is there reminded of how a certain plot against his life had been discovered and prevented, and he asks if the man had been rewarded, and is told no, it was Mordecai, the Jew, and he had received no reward. So he sends for Haman and asks him what shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honour. Haman, never doubting that it means himself, advises that he be dressed in royal apparel and brought before the king, and his disappointment and rage when he is ordered to do this to Mordecai are very great, but he dare not refuse.

Still smarting under the humiliation, he goes with the king to Esther's banquet, and when it is ended, the king asks again what her request is, and she replies, "The life of my people," and when she tells him of Haman's wicked plot, the latter throws himself at her feet to beg forgivenness, but the king is so enraged at his daring to approach so near the queen, that he orders him to be at once taken away and hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai.

E. J. T.

GLEANINGS.

"It was in the golden morning of the early world, when an angel sat weeping outside the closed gates of Eden. He had fallen from his high estate through loving a daughter of earth, nor was he permitted to enter again until she whom he loved had planted the flowers of the forget-me-not in every corner of the world. He returned to earth and assisted her, and they went hand-in-hand over the world planting the forget-me-not. When their task was ended, they entered Paradise together; for the fair woman, without tasting the bitterness of death, became immortal like the angel, whose love her beauty had won, when she sat by the river twining the forget-me-not in her hair."

Folk Lore of Plants.

The following is a fable extracted from "My Hindustani Manual:"—Certain Arab merchants went to a king of Persia and exhibited some fine horses for sale. The king liked the horses very much, and bought them. He gave the merchants two lakhs of rupees over and above the purchase, and told them to bring more horses from their own country as soon as possible. The merchants, upon this agreement, took their leave. One day afterwards, the king, exhilarated with wine, said to the Wazir, "Make out a list of all the fools in my dominions." The Wazir represented that he had already done so, and put his Majesty's name at the very head of the list. The king asked why so. He replied, "Because you gave two lakhs of rupees for horses to be brought by merchants for whom no person is security, neither does anyone know what part of Arabia they belong to; and that is a sign of the greatest folly." The king: "But if the merchants should bring the horses, what is then to be done!" The Wazir answered, "Sire, if they should be such fools as to bring the horses, I will insert the names of the merchants at the head of the list, and your Majesty's name will in that case occupy only the second place."

WHAT HAVE YOU BROUGHT?

BY EGBERT L. BANGS.

"WHAT have you brought, O butterfly fair,
As, flitting about in the summer air,
You have plumed your beautiful, coloured wings
Where the flowers bloom and the robin sings?"

"I've looked on the flowers with loving eye,
And the bee I have seen with laden thigh;
But nothing have done, and nothing brought,
For ease and pleasure are all I have sought."

"O busy bee, whose hum I have heard,
A bass to the alto of singing bird,
What precious gift have you brought your queen
From the clover blooms and meadows green?"

"The palace wherein my queen doth dwell
Is deftly furnished with many a cell;
And I to-day have some of them filled
With crystal drops from clover distilled."

"O ship that cometh from distant land,
Breasting the wave so gallant and grand,
I would see the treasures you have in store,
Carefully gathered from foreign shore."

"I have nuts and spices down in my hold,
Laces and silks and nuggets of gold;
I have fruits that grew in heathen lands,
And diamonds washed from Indian sands."

I see in the world so bright and fair,
'Mid the pomp of life and fashion's glare,
Full many a one who, if asked to-day,
What have you done for the Master? would say,—

"The summer is gone and the harvest past;
My butterfly life is ending at last.
I nothing have done and nothing have brought;
For ease and pleasure are all I have sought."

But some there be who have wrought full well,
And have filled their lives, as the bee its cell,
With sweetness gathered along the way,
Till they see the dawn of the perfect day.

I see in many a humble life,
That has passed through storms with dangers rife,
Far richer treasures than sailors bring
To fill the coffers of merchant or king.

O soul that nearest the promised land,
What hast thou brought for the Master's hand?
Should he come to thee and ask thee to-day,
Is there only this that thou could'st say?—

"The summer is gone and the harvest past;
My butterfly life is ending at last.
I nothing have done and nothing have brought;
For ease and pleasure are all I have sought."